

Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān (The All-Merciful)

This Sūrah is Madanī, and it has 78 verses and 3 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 25

الرَّحْمَنُ ﴿١﴾ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ﴿٣﴾ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ﴿٤﴾ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ ﴿٥﴾ وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ ﴿٦﴾ وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٧﴾ أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ ﴿٨﴾ وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٩﴾ وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ ﴿١٠﴾ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ ﴿١٢﴾ وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ ﴿١٣﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ ﴿١٥﴾ وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِنْ نَارٍ ﴿١٦﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبِّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ ﴿١٨﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ

كَأَلْأَعْلَامِ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَبَآئِيَ الْآءِ رَبِّكَمَا تُكَدِّبِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

The Raḥmān (The All-Merciful) [1] has taught the Qur'ān. [2] He has created man. [3] He has taught him (how) to express himself. [4] The sun and the moon are (bound) by a (fixed) calculation. [5] And the vine and the tree both prostrate (to Allah). [6] And He raised the sky high, and has placed the scale, [7] so that you should not be wrongful in weighing. [8] And observe the correct weight with fairness, and do not make weighing deficient. [9] And the earth is placed by Him for creatures, [10] in which there are fruits and the date-palms having sheaths, [11] and the grain having chaff, and fragrant flowers. [12] So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [13] He has created man from dry clay, ringing like pottery, [14] and created Jann (father of the Jinn) from a smokeless flame of fire. [15] So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [16] He is the Lord of both points of sunrise and both points of sunset. [17] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [18] He has set forth the two seas that meet together, [19] while between them there is a barrier they do not transgress. [20] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [21] From both of them come forth the pearl and the coral. [22] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [23] And His are the sailing ships raised up in the sea like mountains. [24] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [25]

Linkage of the Sūrah and the Wisdom of Repeating the words, 'Which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?'

The preceding Sūrah Al-Qamar was mainly concerned with some of the rebellious nations of antiquity who were punished for rejecting the Divine Message. The description of every punishment was followed by the sentence: فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذْرٍ (Then how was My torment and My warnings? ...54:16). This sentence was repeated many times in order to warn people against similar Divine punishment. Another verse that was repeated as a refrain at telling intervals is وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ "And indeed We have made the Qur'ān easy for seeking advice. So, is there one to seek advice?...54:17). This verse urges people to accept the Qur'ānic Message, believe in it and follow its right guidance.

Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān, on the other hand, mainly describes the boons and bounties of Allah, of this world as well as of the Hereafter. Thus when a particular bounty of Allah is described, the verse *فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ* (*fa-bi-ayyi' ālā'i Rabbikumā tukadhdhibān* (So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?) is used deliberately as a refrain in order to awaken the people and urge them to give thanks to Allah for His favours. This verse is repeated thirty-one times in the Sūrah. According to the rules of stylish usage, repetition of an expression serves the deliberate purpose of 'emphasis'. Especially, the repetition in these two Sūrahs of the Qur'ān is repetition only in apparent form. In reality, the repeated sentence is each time related to a new subject, and having its own significance, cannot be taken as redundant. In Sūrah Al-Qamar, the *نَكِيفُ* (Then how was My torment 54:16) has followed the description of each new torment. Likewise, in Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān, after the description of every new bounty the verse *فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ* (So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?) is repeated, which being related to a new subject is not redundant. 'Allāmah Suyūṭī رحمه الله تعالى terms this device of repetition as *At-tardīd*. Arab masters of eloquence, regard this device as aesthetically beautiful, polished, effective, moving, forceful and persuasive use of language. The device is used both in prose as well as in poetry. It is used not only in Arabic but [almost in all the languages of the world, as for instance] the most accomplished and consummate poets of Persian and Urdu have used them. This is no occasion to collect samples of their compositions here. Tafsīr Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī has collected its several examples on this occasion.

Was Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān Revealed in Makkah or Madinah?

On the basis of a few narratives Imām Qurṭubī concluded that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah, and he prefers this view. Tirmidhī records from Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited this Sūrah before some people who remained silent. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

"I recited this Sūrah to the Jinns, on the night of Jinn, and their receptive response was better than yours! Whenever I recited Allah's statement *فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ* (So, (O mankind and Jinn,) which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?) They said: *لَا بَشَىءَ مِنَّا نَعِيكَ رَبَّنَا نُكَذِّبُ فَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ* 'None of your bounties do we deny, our Lord! All praise is due to You'".

This narrative indicates that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah, because 'the night of the Jinn' refers to the night when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ met the Jinns to convey to them the Message of the Qur'ān and impart knowledge to them. This incident took place in Makkah. Likewise, Imām Qurṭubī refers to a few more narratives which indicate that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah .

The opening word of the first verse of the Sūrah is Ar-Raḥmān (The All-Merciful). One of the reasons for beginning the Sūrah with this name of Allah is presumably that the infidels of Makkah were unaware of this name of Allah. They used to say, مَا الرَّحْمَنُ؟ "What is Ar-Raḥmān?" [as mentioned in 25:60] This name has been selected here to let them know it.

The second reason could be to indicate that teaching the Qur'ān, which has been mentioned in the next verse as Allah's act, was a sheer gift flowing from Allah's beneficence, and not because this or any other act is obligatory on Allah for which He could be held responsible, nor because He is in need of anyone.

In the entire Sūrah, Allah's bounties - worldly as well spiritual - are continuously recounted. The greatest of all bounties is the knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān, because it is an all-comprehensive Book directing man in temporal and spiritual matters and in matters relating to this world and the next. Those who heeded the Holy Qur'ān and fulfilled its right, like the blessed Companions, Allah raised their status in the Hereafter and blessed them with inconceivable bounties and favours. In this world too they are promoted to such high stations as the greatest of kings were not able to attain.

Grammatically speaking, the verb عَلَّمَ 'allama [to teach] requires two objects, the direct and the indirect: [1] that of which the knowledge is imparted; and [2] he to whom the knowledge is imparted. Here the first object [the Holy Qur'ān] is explicitly stated, but the second object is not. Some of the exegetes express the view that the second object is the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who was taught the Qur'ān directly by Allah, and through him the entire creation. It is possible to look at it from another point of view: The purpose of the Holy Qur'ān is to give guidance to the entire creation of Allah, and to teach them good morals and the righteous deeds. Therefore, no particular object has been specified. The fact that the

second object has not been explicitly specified indicates its generality, that is, it refers to the totality of human beings.

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ (He has created man. He has taught him [how] to express himself...55:4) Man's creation itself is a great boon of Allah and in the natural order of things he is first and foremost, so much so that even imparting the knowledge of the Qur'ān, which is mentioned first, can only take place after his creation. However, the bounty of Qur'ānic knowledge is mentioned first, and the creation of man later, because the fundamental object of man's creation is to impart to him the knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān, and for him to follow its guidance as stated elsewhere in the Qur'ān: وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (And I did not create the Jinns and the human beings except that they should worship Me.) [51:56] Surely, worship without Divine guidance is not possible. The source of the Divine guidance is the Holy Qur'ān. Thus Qur'ānic knowledge is mentioned before man's creation.

Having created man, uncountable bounties are bestowed upon him. Of them, imparting the knowledge of expression has been mentioned especially, because the bounties necessary for man's growth and development, and his existence and survival like his food and water, his protection against cold and heat, his dwelling arrangements and so on are bounties in which all creatures are equal partners. Among the bounties that are peculiar to human beings Knowledge of the Qur'ān has been mentioned first, and it was followed by the knowledge of expressions, because deriving benefit from the Qur'ān, and imparting it to others, is dependent on the knowledge of expression. The word *bayān* ('how to express himself') comprehends all the means of communication created by Allah, like speech, writing etc. There are various languages and dialects of various nations in various regions of the world. All these are constituent parts of linguistic knowledge which is the practical interpretation or application of the verse عَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا (And He taught Adam the names, all of them) [2:31] فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

Allah's Signs

الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ (The sun and the moon are [bound] by a [fixed] calculation...55:5) This verse draws attention to two of the celestial bodies from among the bounties of Allah. They are especially mentioned presumably because the entire system of this world depends on the

movement of these bodies in their orbits in perfect succession, according to precise calculation that is never delayed nor disturbed.

The word حُسْبَان *hūsban* with *ḍammah* [=u] on the first letter is, according to some lexicologists, used in the sense of *ḥisāb*, the infinitive, meaning 'to calculate', like غفران *ghufrān* [to forgive], سُبْحَانَ *sūbhan* [to declare purity], قرآن *Qur'ān* [to recite or read]. Other lexicologists feel that *hūsban* is the plural of *ḥisāb*. The meaning of the verse, according to the former lexicologists, would be: The two bodies, on which depends man's entire life, run on fixed courses. They are subject to certain laws and they perform regularly, punctually and unerringly their allocated tasks - alternation of night and day, change of seasons and determination of years and months. If we go by the latter lexicologists' interpretation that *hūsban* is the plural of *ḥisāb*, then it will refer to the fact that each of the sun and the moon has its own calculated orbits. The entire solar system is proceeding on the basis of different calculations, and each one of them is so firm and accurate that no deviation has ever occurred, since millions of years, even for a second.

This age is regarded as an age of ascension for science. The marvelous new inventions of the scientific age have caused wonders even for the philosophers. However, there is a clear difference between human inventions and Divine creation, which every discerning person can observe. Human inventions are subject to a series of continuous breakdown and damage, which require to be serviced, repaired, overhauled or refurbished. A machine, no matter how strong or sophisticated, needs to be repaired or at least serviced after a while. If this is not done in time, it will remain useless. The huge Divine creation, on the other hand, needs no repairs, no service nor refurbishing at any time. Neither the solar system overtakes the lunar movement, nor does the lunar movement outstrip the solar system. The sun and the moon and other celestial bodies, each float and move in its own orbit.

وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ (And the vine and the tree both prostrate [to Allāh]....55:6). The word *najm* refers to the 'plants having no stem' and the word *shajar* refers to any 'tree' with stems or trunk, twigs and branches. All of them prostrate to Allāh. *Sajdah* or prostration is the supreme symbol of humility, respect, surrender and unconditional love and obedience of Allāh. In this context, the verse means that Allāh has

assigned a specific task to every tree, plant, creeper, and their leaves and fruits for the benefit of mankind and they are performing their tasks without the slightest deviation from their assigned duties. The plants without stems and the trees humbly submit themselves to Allah's will. Verse [6], read along with the preceding verse [5], shows that everything, from the largest celestial body to the smallest plant, is subject to His laws manifest in nature. A little disturbance in or deviation from their set course would bring down in pieces the whole universe, which has been created for the service of man. It is inconceivable, therefore, that man for whose service this vast and complicated but perfectly regulated universe has been brought into being would have been created without a purpose. The life of man surely has a grand Divine aim to which repeated reference has been made in this entire Surah and in other parts of the Qur'ān. There are two types of obedience: [1] obedience that is carried out by free will, as for instance, man and *jinn* are given free will to choose between obeying Allah's laws or disobeying them; and [2] all other creation of Allah are assigned specific tasks or duties to perform without any choice. The latter is referred to as *iṭā'ah takwīniyyah* or *jabriyyah* 'compelled or coerced obedience'. In the current verse, the word *sajdah* refers to this type of 'obedience to Allah's laws in nature' where the natural objects have no choice.

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ (And He raised the sky high, and has placed the scale....55:7) The verbs *rafa'a* and *wada'a* are antonyms: *rafa'a* means 'to raise up' and *wada'a* means 'to put down'. The verse first describes that Allah has raised the heavens. This could have its obvious or outer meaning referring to the physical height of the sky, and it could also have its metaphorical meaning, referring to the high status of the heaven: In relation to the earth, the heaven occupies a higher position. Normally, the earth is understood to be the opposite of the heaven. From this point of view, the heaven and the earth are treated as opposites and mentioned throughout the Holy Qur'ān in that way. Having described the high position of the heaven, the Qur'ān goes on to describe that Allah has set the balance, but 'placing the scale' *vis-à-vis* 'raising the heaven' does not seem to form a suitable pair according to the linguistic norm. As a matter of fact, a closer analysis of the context indicates that the verse is describing the 'placing of the earth'. Three verses later, verse (10) reads

وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ (And the earth is placed by Him for creatures...55:10) Thus the Qur'an is actually describing the heaven and the earth as opposites. In between the two, a third factor [that of placing the scale] is inserted for a sage reason. The wisdom in this seems to lie in the fact that the verses that follow lay stress on observing justice and fairness. They do not allow violation of rights and practice of injustice. Following the verses referring to 'raising the heaven' and 'placing the earth' are verses that describe the scale and enjoin the correct use of it. This implies that the ultimate purpose of creating the heaven and the earth was to establish justice, peace and harmony. Peace, safety, security and harmony cannot prevail on earth without establishing justice. Without justice, chaos, disorder, mischief and corruption will hold sway in the land. Allah, the Pure and the Most High, knows best!

The word مِيزَان *mizān* has been interpreted variously. In the current verse, scholars like Mujāhid, Qatādah, Suddī and others interpret it in the sense of 'justice', because that is the purpose of *mizān* [scale]. Other scholars have taken the word in its obvious sense of a piece of equipment used to determine the weights of people or things. This equipment could be a pair of scales, consisting of a bar with a pan or a dish at each end or it may be some modern equipment used for the purpose of measuring and weighing. The ultimate sense of this interpretation in any case is maintaining rights and establishing justice and fair play.

أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ (so that you should not be wrongful in weighing....55:8). The earlier verse stated the creation of the scale, and this verse states the reason for its creation. The imperfect verb تَطْغَوْا *tatghaw* is derived from أَتْغَى *tughyān* which stands for 'injustice'. Thus verses [7] and [8] put together mean: '[The '*mizān* or scale' has been created so that you may not transgress the balance and thus practice injustice'.

وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ (And observe the correct weight with fairness, ...55:9). The word قِسْط *qisṭ* literally means 'justice'. The meaning is obvious: 'And observe the weight with equity'.

وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ (and do not make weighing deficient...55:9). The word خُسْر *khusr* means 'to skimp or make deficient'. The opening part of verse [9] was the positive aspect of the injunction, and the concluding part is its negative aspect, in that it is unlawful to fall short of measure or weight.

The two parts, positive and negative, put together the verse as a whole means 'Do not cheat in weights and measures, but rather observe justice and fairness'.

وَالْأَرْضُ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ (And the earth is placed by Him for creatures...55:10). The word أَنَام *'anām* with *fatha* [=a] on the first letter on the grammatical measure of سَحَاب *saḥāb*, refers to all the creatures that are on the surface of the earth. Baiḍāwī translates the word as 'everything having a soul'. Evidently, the word *'anām* in the verse refers to mankind and the *jinn*, because only these two species of Allah's creation are obligated to observe the precepts of Sharī'ah. Furthermore, they are addressed throughout the Sūrah. For instance in the refrain verse فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ (So, [O mankind and Jinn,] which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?...55:13) The dual second person attached pronouns and the dual forms of the verbs second person sustained throughout Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān are addressed to Jinn and mankind.

فَبِهَا فَاكِهَةٌ (in which there are fruits55:11). The word فَاكِهَةٌ *fākihah* refers to fruits that are normally eaten after food for pleasure.

وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ (...and the date-palms having sheaths...55:11). The word أَكْمَام *akmām* is the plural of كِم *kimm*, and refers to 'the cover that surrounds and protects dates and other fruits in the beginning'.

وَالْحَبُّ ذُرُّ الْعَصْفِ (and the grain having chaff,55:12). The word حَب *ḥabb* means grain, as for instance 'wheat', 'gram', 'rice', 'a kind of vetch', 'lentil' and so on. The word *'aṣf* is the outer cover of some type of grains, like rice or wheat husk, which Allah creates with His power and consummate wisdom. Man's attention is drawn to the fact that each grain of the food he eats several times a day has been created by Allah, out of His unbounded grace and beneficence, from soil and water in inconceivably wonderful ways. He protected every grain against insects with the outer cover until maturity, so that it was prepared as a morsel of food. The current verse, thus, briefly points to all those natural things that are so essential for the physical development of man. The mention of *'aṣf* [husk] is to remind that it is the fodder for your animals. This is another bounty of Allah because man needs the milk of the animals for nourishment. Furthermore, animals are used as a means of transportation to convey human beings from place to place as well as to

carry load, cargo and luggage.

وَالرَّيْحَانُ (...and fragrant flowers....55:12). The popular meaning of the word الرَّيْحَان *raiḥān* is fragrance or fragrant plant or sweet-scented plants. Ibn Zaid has interpreted the word thus in the current verse. Allah has produced a variety of fragrances and sweet-smelling flowers on plants and trees. Sometimes the word *raiḥān* is used in the sense of livelihood and sustenance. It is said in Arabic: خَرَجْتُ أَطْلُبُ رَيْحَانَ اللَّهِ (I came out looking for sustenance provided by Allah.) Sayyidna Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه interprets it in this strain.

Mankind and Jinn are surrounded by Divine Bounties

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ (So, [O mankind and Jinn,] which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny?...55:13). The word آلَاء *‘alā’* is the plural and it means 'benefits, benefaction, favour, boon, blessing or bounty'. The address is to the two species of Jinn and men referred to in verse 33 below and many other verses of Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān where Jinn are specifically mentioned.

The Creation of Humans and Jinns

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ (He has created man from dry clay, ringing like pottery...55:14). The word *insān* [man] in this context refers unanimously to ‘Adam عليه السلام’. The word *ṣalṣāl* [clay] refers to the wet soil when it becomes dry and heavy. The word *fakḥkhār* refers to the wet soil when it is baked.

وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِّنْ نَّارٍ (and created *Jānn* [father of the *Jinns*] from a smokeless flame of fire...55:15) The word جَان *jann*, refers to the class of beings called '*jinn*'. The word مَّارِج *mārij* refers to the 'smokeless flame of fire'. The major element in the creation of *jinn* is the smokeless flame of fire, just as the major element in the creation of man is dry sounding clay.

Allah is the Lord of the Two Points of Sunrise and the Two Points of Sunset

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ (He is the Lord of both points of sunrise and both points of sunset...55:17) The sun rises at different cardinal points in the east in winter and in summer: Thus we have the two easts [*mashriqain*]. Similarly, the sun sets at different cardinal points in the west in winter and summer: Thus we have two wests [*maghribain*].

Allah created Different Types of Water

مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِينِ (He has set forth the two seas that meet together...55:19). Literally, the verb *maraja* means 'to let loose'. The word *bahrain* [two seas or two types of waters] refers to sweet and salty waters. Allah has created two types of waters. In some places the two seas meet together, the samples of which are available in every region of the world. However, where the sweet and salty waters meet, there is a distinct barrier between the sweet and salty waters. In some cases, the two types of waters are seen distinctly in higher or lower position. If the salty water overrides the sweet water, the characteristics of the sweet water will not be spoiled; nor will the characteristics of the salty water be affected in any way if the sweet water overrides it. Thus the Qur'an states: مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِينِ "He has set forth the two seas that meet together, while between them there is a barrier they do not transgress....55:20)

يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ (From both of them come forth the pearl and the coral...55:22). The meaning of لُؤْلُؤُ *lu'lu'* is quite well-known, that is, 'pearl'. The word مَرْجَانُ *marjan* too is one of the 'precious jewels or gems'. It is a hard substance formed from coral which has branches like trees. Both these precious jewels or gems are produced in the waters. It is generally understood that pearls and corals are both hunted or fished for in the salty waters, not in the fresh waters, whereas the verse states that they are fished for in both kinds of waters. It is possible to reconcile the verse with the general understanding: Pearls as well as corals originate in sweet waters where it is not easy to hunt for or from which to fish out the gems or jewels. The sweet waters flow into the salty waters where the substances are carried and deposited. The pearls and corals are brought out from there. Therefore, the source of the pearls and corals is said to be the salty seas.

وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ (And His are the sailing ships raised up in the sea like mountains...55:24). The word جَوَارِي *jawari* is the plural of جَارِيَة *jariyah*. One of its meanings is ship and that is the sense in which it is used in the current verse. The word مُنْشَأَتْ *munsha'at* is derived from نَشَأَ *nasha'a* which means 'to rise up or high, be lofty'. *Al-munsha'at* thus refers to 'sails of the ships that are lofty'. The verse describes the wisdom of making the ship and its running on the surface of the water.

Verses 26 - 45

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ
 ﴿٢٧﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ يَسْأَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ
 ﴿٣٠﴾ سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيَّةَ الثَّقَلَيْنِ ﴿٣١﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾
 يَمْعُشَرُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا
 تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ يُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَوَاطِئَ مِنْ نَارٍ ۖ وَنَحَاسٍ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرِينَ
 ﴿٣٥﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَإِذَا انشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ
 وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ
 لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ
 ﴿٤٠﴾ يُعْرِفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمِهِمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ
 ﴿٤١﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا
 الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ إِنْ ۖ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ
 رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

Every one who lives on it (the earth) has to perish. [26] And your Lord's Countenance will remain, full of majesty, full of honour. [27] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [28] All those in the heavens and the earth beseech Him (for their needs.) Every day He is at some task. [29] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [30] Soon We are going to spare Ourselves for you (to reckon your deeds), O two heavy species (of Jinns and mankind)! [31] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [32] O genera of Jinns and mankind, If you are able to penetrate beyond the realms of the heavens and the earth, then penetrate. You cannot penetrate except with an authority. [33] So, which of the bounties of your Lord

will you deny? [34] A flame of fire and a smoke will be loosed against you, and you will not (be able) to defend. [35] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [36] So, (it will be a terrible event) when the sky will be split apart and will become rosy, like (red) hides. [37] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [38] On that day, neither a man will be questioned about his sin, nor a Jinn, (because every thing is known to Allah). [39] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [40] The guilty ones will be recognized (by the angels) by their marks and will be seized by foreheads and feet. [41] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [42] This is the Jahannam (Hell) that the guilty people deny. [43] They will circle around between it and between hot, boiling water. [44] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [45]

Allah is the Ever-living, Free of all Need

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ (Every one who lives on it (the earth) has to perish, and your Lord's Countenance will remain, full of majesty, full of honour...55:26-27). The attached pronoun [it] refers to الأرض *al-ard* [the earth] which has been explicitly mentioned antecedently in verse [10] وَالْأَرْضُ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ (And the earth is placed by Him for creatures..). Furthermore, 'the earth' is one of those general things that can be referred to by a pronoun even if they are not mentioned explicitly as an antecedent. Verse [26] means that man and *jinn* that dwell on the earth are subject to decay and death. *Jinn* and man have specifically been singled out in this verse, because in this Surah these two species of Allah's creation are mainly addressed. This, however, does not necessarily imply that the heaven and the celestial beings are not perishable. In fact, on another occasion in the Qur'ān Allah has stated in general terms: كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ (Everything is going to perish except His Face). (28:88)

وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ (...your Lord's Countenance55:27). The word *wajh* [Face], according to majority of the exegetes, stands for the 'Being of Allah'. The attached second person pronoun in *rabb-i-kā* [=your Lord] refers to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. It is a great honour for him that he should be remembered by Allah in special ways when praising him, as for instance, 'abduhu (His servant). Here, Allah, the Lord of lords, declares His direct special relationship with the Holy Prophet ﷺ and addresses him thus:

rabb-i-kā [your Lord].

According to the well-known exegetes, the verse purports to convey that since everything [including *jinn* and mankind] dwelling on earth will be reduced to nothing, and the heavenly bodies all brought to naught, and the whole material universe made non-existent, still human reason demands that there should be a Being who should remain and who should never die. Such a Being is Allah Who created the whole universe and Who is the First and the Final Cause of all things. He alone will abide because He is Self-Subsisting, All-Sustaining, Independent and Besought of all.

The word *fanā'* has two possible meanings: [1] everything is potentially subject to decay and death and is eventually destined to perish, having no capacity for permanence and immortality; and [2] all things will actually pass away on Doomsday.

Other exegetes have interpreted the phrase وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ 'your Lord's Countenance' to mean 'your side', that is, out of all existent beings only those things will attain permanence that are on the side of Allah. This includes the Being of Allah and His Attributes. It also includes the actions and conditions of Allah's creation that remain firmly attached to Allah and is never separated from Him in any situation. In sum, the verse means: 'Everything that man, *jinn* and angels do for Allah's pleasure will remain under His care and protection and as such will attain permanence, never to perish.' This interpretation is supported by another verse: مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ (What is with you shall end and what is with Allah shall last....16:96) The phrase 'what is with you' refers to 'wealth and power, comfort and discomfort, love and hatred'. All these states and matters are transitory and must perish. The phrase 'what is with Allah' refers to 'man's actions and states which remain firmly attached to Allah and is never separated from Him in any situation are destined to last, never to perish. Allah, the Pure and Most Exalted, knows best!

ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ (...full of majesty, full of honour...55:27). In other words, the Lord is the Master of Greatness, Grandeur and Tremendousness. This is Allah's Majesty that overwhelms His creation and fills them with awe. The Lord is also the Master of Honour, signifying that those who benefit by the great favours Allah has bestowed upon them and walk in the path

of truth and righteousness will be granted more favours by the Lord of Honour. Despite being the Lord of Greatness and Majesty, Allah is not like the worldly kings and rulers who would not pay attention to others or the indigent people. He grants their petition and invocation. The next verse [to be analysed in the forthcoming paragraph] bears testimony to this interpretation. The current phrase under discussion constitutes one of those special Attributes of Allah which if a suppliant were to invoke before calling upon Allah for help, protection, inspiration and a host of other things, the supplication will be readily granted as recorded in Tirmidhi, Nasa'ī and Musnad of Aḥmad. Ibn 'Amir رحمته الله has transmitted that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *الْطُّوْأُ بِمَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ* (Persist [in invoking Allah] with 'O Lord of Majesty and Honour'.) The imperative *alizzū* is derived from the infinitive *ilzāz* which means 'to continue firmly in some course of action'. [Maẓharī]

يَسْئَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ (All those in the heavens and the earth beseech Him. Every day He is at some task...55:29) The verse signifies that all creatures stand in need of Allah, in all conditions and situations. They all seek His help willingly or unwillingly. The earthly creatures ask for their specific needs. In this world, they need sustenance, health and welfare, and comfort; and in the Hereafter, they need forgiveness, mercy and Paradise. The celestial creatures do not eat and drink, they do however need Allah's mercy and grace. Allah's grace, forgiveness and so on surround them all the time. The phrase *كُلَّ يَوْمٍ* 'every day' is the adverb of time of the verb *يَسْئَلُهُ* 'beseech'.⁽¹⁾ The 'day' is not used in its popular sense, but in the sense of 'time' in general. All His creation, in different regions, in different languages implore for their needs all the time. Obviously, each member of the earthly and celestial beings has countless needs. Who else besides the Absolutely Powerful Being, the Lord of Majesty, is able to respond to their needs every moment of the time? Therefore, 'every day' is followed by the sentence *هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ* 'He is at some task', that is, His Attributes know no limit or count, and keep finding their manifestations in diverse ways all the time. He gives life to some and causes others to die. He elevates some and others He abases. Some He

(1) This is according to one construction of the sentence. Other exegetes have taken the phrase 'every day' as relating to 'He is at some task'. The translation of the verse given above is based on this latter construction, which is also adopted by Moulana Thanawi رحمه الله تعالى. (Muhammad Taqi Usmani).

causes to become ill and others He cures. He alleviates the adversity of some; He causes the aggrieved ones to smile; He grants the requests of suppliants; He forgives the sins of the sinners and makes them deserving of Paradise; He gives power to some, and He snatches it away from others and abases them. In sum, every Attribute of Allah keeps finding its manifestation in diverse ways all the time.

A Warning for Humans and Jinn

سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيُّهَ الثَّقَلَيْنِ (Soon We are going to spare Ourselves for you [to reckon your deeds], O two heavy species! ...55:31) The word ثَقَلَانِ *thaqalān* is the dual of ثَقْل *thaqal* which denotes 'burden or load'. Thus the word *ath-thaqalān* [the dual form] denotes 'the two heavy or weighty things', and signifies 'the men' and 'the Jinn' as the context shows. In Arabic, the word *thaqal* refers to anything the weight or value of which is well-known. It is in this sense that the word has occurred in the following Prophetic Tradition: إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمْ الثَّقَلَيْنِ (Indeed I leave amongst you two weighty and valuable things... which will continue to guide you.) Some versions of the Tradition state that those two weighty and valuable things are: كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَعَتْرَتِي "Allah's Book and my family" and others state: كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَ سُنَّتِي "Allah's Book and my normative Sunnah [practices]". The end result of both the versions amount to the same thing because *‘itrah* refers to both types of family, lineal or spiritual. Therefore, it refers to all the noble Companions. The end result of the Tradition is that after the Prophet ﷺ there are two things that will serve to guide and set aright the Muslims: [1] the Book of Allah; and [2] the example of the blessed Companions in all their mutual dealings and transactions. The version that uses *‘itrah* instead of *Sunnah* means the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ that reached the Muslims through the noble Companions.

Be that as it may, the word ثَقَلَيْنِ *thaqalain* in the Tradition refers to the two weighty and valuable things. From this point of view, *Ath-thaqalān*, in the current verse, refers to the two species of Allah's creation, *Jinn* and human beings, because they are the weightiest and most valuable beings [possessed of soul] dwelling on earth.

Then the verse says, 'Soon We are going to spare Ourselves for you' The verb سَنَفْرُغُ *sanafrughu* is derived from فَرَاغَ *farāgh*, which means to be free from occupation. The antonym of *farāgh* is شُغْلٌ *shughl* [to occupy]. The word *farāgh* informs us of two things: [1] that one was occupied with

something; and [2] now he has become free from that occupation. This type of *farāgh* is common in human beings. However, neither of these senses apply to Allah. He is above them. Surely, nothing will occupy Allah from attending to anything else, nor does He become free or unoccupied like human beings do. Therefore, the verb *sanafrughu* [We are going to spare Ourselves to you] is employed as a metaphor. This metaphorical use of the word is common in human speech. This expression is used to show the importance of some work: 'We are now free to attend to you, being fully focused on you'. Anyone who fully focuses attention on any work, idiomatically it is said that 'he has no other work or he has nothing else to do'. In a verse preceding this [29], it was mentioned that the earthly beings ask for their specific needs, such as sustenance, health and welfare, and comfort; and forgiveness, mercy and Paradise. The celestial beings need Allah's mercy, grace and forgiveness which surround them all the time. From this point of view, Allah is, every moment, in a state of characteristic manifestation of His Divinity and Divine Attributes. The verse *sanafrughu* [We are going to spare Ourselves for you...] indicates that on the Day of Judgement all petitions, their acceptance and acting on them will come to an end. Of all the manifestations, there shall remain only one manifestation and that is taking account of deeds and passing judgement with absolute justice and equity. [Rūh]

يَمْعَشَرُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا
لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَنٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

(O genera of Jinns and mankind, If you are able to penetrate beyond the realms of the heavens and the earth, then penetrate. You cannot penetrate except with an authority....55:33)

In the preceding verse *jinn* and mankind were addressed as *Ath-thaqalan* and warned that their deeds will be reviewed and every single one of them will attract reward or punishment. The current verse purports to say that no one will be able to hide from death, nor will anyone be able to escape from attendance or giving account of actions on the Day of Judgement. This verse does not use the expression *ثَقُلْنِ* *Thaqalan* as in the preceding verse but explicitly uses the expression *يَمْعَشَرُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ* (O genera of *Jinns* and mankind) '*Jinn*' is mentioned first followed by 'men' presumably because a high-power energy is required to pass through the confines of heaven and earth. Allah has given Jinns

more power than human beings in such matters. The meaning of the verse is: 'O Company of *Jinn* and human beings, if you think that you will be able to find refuge and thus avert death by avoiding the angel of death or run away from the Plains of Gathering or the Plains of Reckoning, then try to cross the bounds of the heavens and the earth if you have the power and ability to do so.' This is no mean task. This requires high-powered energy. The combined forces of Jinns and mankind will not be able to harness the energy to go beyond the confines of the heavens and the earth. The purport of the verse is not to show the possibility or probability of passing beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth. The proposition is hypothetical. The purport of the verse is to demonstrate the utter powerlessness and inability of men and Jinns to achieve this feat.

If the purpose of 'penetrating through the heavens and the earth' mentioned in the verse is to escape death, then it refers to this world and means: It is not within the power of any man or *Jinns* to cross the bounds of the heavens and the earth and escape death. This is stated according to human thinking. Otherwise, no one is outside the power and the authority of Allah, even if he crosses the bounds of the heaven and the earth. And if the escape intended by 'penetrating through the heavens and the earth' stands for 'escaping accountability on the Day of Reckoning', the purport of the verse is to demonstrate its absolute impossibility. For according to other Qur'ānic verses and Traditional narratives the heaven will crack open, on the Day of Judgement, and all the angels will border on the sides of the earth and the people will be hemmed in from all sides. The Jinn and human beings will experience the horrors of the Day of Resurrection and run in different directions. In whichever direction they run the angels will lay siege to the areas that Allah has fortified for the purpose of recapturing the escapees. [Rūḥ]

This Verse does not point to Space Exploration by Rockets and Sputniks

In the present scientific age, experiments are being conducted in an effort to come out of the gravity of the earth and to explore the heavenly bodies by rockets, sputniks and other spacecrafts. Obviously, none of these experiments are conducted beyond the bounds of the heaven. In fact, they are far below the surface of the heaven, let alone crossing the

heavenly confines. Thus this verse has no bearing on space travels and reported incidents of reaching some of the heavenly bodies. Some simple-minded people posit this verse as the basis of demonstrating the possibility of space travels, whereas these simpletons are merely displaying ignorance about the actual meaning of the Qur'ān.

يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شُوَاظٌ مِّنْ نَّارٍ وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرْنَ (A flame of fire and a smoke will be loosed against you, and you will not [be able] to defend...55:35) Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ and other leading authorities on Qur'ānic exegesis have said that the word *shuwaz* with refers to 'flame or fire without smoke' and the word *nuḥās* refers to 'smoke in which there is no flame'. This verse too addresses the two species of creation, the *jinn*s and mankind. It addresses them and describes how fire and smoke will be unleashed against them. The verse could mean that after the reckoning is over, and the disbelievers are sent to the Hell, they will experience two different types of punishment. In some places there will be only fire and flame, with no smoke at all. In other places there will be only smoke and no flame or fire. Other Qur'ānic exegetes regard this verse as a supplement to the preceding one, and assign the following meaning to it: O *jinn* and mankind; it is not within your power to cross the bounds of the heavens. If you do attempt to escape on the Day of Resurrection, then the angels [including those guarding the Hellfire] will bring you back by directing the flames of fire and smoke. The verb *فَلَا تَنْتَصِرْنَ* *falā-tantaṣirān* is derived from *إِنْتَصَارَ* *intiṣār* which means 'to help someone to defend him against a calamity' and thus the words *فَلَا تَنْتَصِرْنَ* *falā-tantaṣirān* signify that the *jinn*s and mankind will not be able to help each other against Divine punishment, try as they might.

The Horrors of the Day of Resurrection

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ (On that day, neither a man will be questioned about his sin, nor a *Jinn*...55:39) One interpretation of this verse is that no one will be asked whether or not he had committed the sin, because it will have already been recorded by the angels in the ledger of deeds, and Allah has the Pre-Eternal knowledge of it. The question will be 'why' did they commit the sin? This is the interpretation of Ibn 'Abbās ؓ. Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى interprets it as follows: There will be no need for the angels of punishment to question the criminals whether or not they committed the sin. They will be known by their special marks [See verse

(41) below] clearly showing on their faces. The angels will be able to recognize them by their distinguishing marks and hurl them into the Hellfire according to the type of misdeeds they might have committed. A composite interpretation of the two explanations is as follows: This event will take place when people will have given account of their deeds, and judgment will have been passed against the criminals to go to Hell on the Day of Reckoning. They will not be questioned nor will any negotiation be held about their sins at that stage. Their characteristic signs will be seen on their faces, and accordingly they will be hurled into Hell.

Qatādah رحمه الله تعالى says that the verse refers to a stage after they will have been questioned about their sins, but they will have refused under oath. Then their mouths and tongues will be sealed, and their hands and feet will be asked to bear witness. At that stage no more questions will be asked from them. Ibn Kathīr notes all three explanations. They are close to each other, and thus there is no conflict.

يُعْرِفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ (The guilty ones will be recognized [by the angels] by their marks and will be seized by foreheads and feet...55:41) The word *sima* means 'a sign'. Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى says that the day when sentence will be passed against the guilty to go to Hell, the following will be their signs: They will be known by their dark faces and their blue eyes. Through grief their faces will turn pale. The angels will recognize the guilty by these signs and seize them.

The word نَوَاصِي *nawāṣī* is the plural of نَاصِيَة *nāṣiyah*, and means 'forelock'. Some will be dragged by their forelocks, and others will be dragged by their feet. Or it could mean that sometimes they will be dragged by their forelocks and at other times they will be dragged by their feet. The third explanation could be that the angels of punishment will bend their foreheads down to their feet and tie the forelocks to the feet, and throw them into the Hellfire. Allah knows best!

Verses 46-78

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٌ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾
ذَوَاتَا أَفْنَانٍ ﴿٤٨﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ

تَجْرِبِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ
 زَوْجٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ مُتَكِيَيْنَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ
 بَطَائِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ ۖ وَجَنَّا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا
 تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ فِيهِنَّ قِصِرَاتُ الطَّرَفِ ۚ لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا
 جَانٌّ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ كَانَهُنَّ الْيَاقُوتُ
 وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٥٨﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾ هَلْ جَزَاءُ
 الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ ﴿٦٠﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَمِنْ
 دُونِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾ مُدْهَمَمَتَيْنِ
 ﴿٦٤﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾ فِيهِمَا عَيْنَتَا نَضَّاجَتَيْنِ ﴿٦٦﴾
 فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ فِيهِمَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَنَخْلٌ وَرُمَانٌ ﴿٦٨﴾
 فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾ فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حِسَانٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ فَبِأَيِّ
 آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ حُورٌ مَّقْصُورَاتٌ فِي الْخِيَامِ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَبِأَيِّ
 آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾ لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٧٤﴾
 فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾ مُتَكِيَيْنَ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خُضِرٍ
 وَعَبَقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ تَبَرَّكَ اسْمُ
 رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ﴿٧٨﴾

And for the one who is fearful of having to stand before his Lord, there are two gardens [46] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [47] both having lot of branches. [48] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [49] In both there are two flowing springs. [50] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [51] In both there are two kinds of every fruit. [52] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [53] (The people of these gardens will be) reclining on floorings whose (even) linings are of thick silk, and the fruits plucked from the two gardens will be at hand.

[54] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [55] In them there are maidens restraining their glances, whom neither a man will have touched before them, nor a Jinn. [56] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [57] They look like rubies and corals. [58] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [59] Is there any reward for goodness other than goodness? [60] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [61] And lesser than these two, there are two other gardens (for the second category of the God-fearing), [62] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [63] both dark green! [64] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [65] In both there are two springs gushing forth profusely. [66] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [67] In both there are fruits and date-palms and pomegranates. [68] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [69] In them there are women, good and gorgeous, [70] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [71] the houris, kept guarded in pavilions [72] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [73] whom neither a man will have touched before them, nor a Jinn. [74] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [75] (The people of these gardens will be) reclining on green cushions and marvelously beautiful mattresses. [76] So, which of the bounties of your Lord will you deny? [77] Glorious is the name of your Lord, the Lord of Majesty, the Lord of Honour. [78]

The Delight of the Righteous in Paradise

The foregoing verses spoke of the horrible punishments to be faced by the disbelievers. In the current set of verses we are told about the rewards and bounties reserved for the righteous believers. The verse 46 speaks of two Gardens that are exclusively reserved 'for those who are fearful of having to stand before their Lord'. This phrase refers to those fortunate believers who are, at all times, concerned about reckoning on the Day of Judgement and, as a result, keep away from all sorts of sins under all circumstances. Obviously, these are the people who enjoy special nearness to Allah. In verse [62] below we read: وَمِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّاتٍ (And lesser than these two, there are two other gardens...55:62) This verse does not specify the class of righteous believers who will receive these gardens. However, the phrase مِنْ دُونِهِمَا *min dunihimā* ('and lesser than these two') indicates that

the Gardens mentioned in verse [62] are for the general body of believers who are lesser in their spiritual attainment than the foremost believers who are granted special nearness to Allah.

The Qur'ānic exegetes have explained the two sets of pairs of Gardens in other ways as well. Here we have adopted the most plausible and preferable explanation: that is, the first two Gardens are reserved exclusively for the foremost believers who are granted special nearness to Allah; and the second two Gardens are reserved for the general body of believers. That the two Gardens mentioned in Verse 62 are inferior to the first two is supported by authentic Traditions. Bayān-ul-Qur'ān cites the Prophetic Tradition from Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr to the effect that while interpreting verses [46] and [62] the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ لِلْمُقَرَّبِينَ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِنْ وَرَقٍ لِأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ "There are two Gardens made of gold for believers who are granted special nearness to Allah; and there are two Gardens made of silver for the People of the Right [that is, for general body of righteous believers]." Also, it is recorded in Ad-Durr-ul-Manthūr that Sayyidnā Barā' Ibn 'Āzib رضي الله عنه said: "The two springs that are flowing freely [in the first two Gardens] are better than the two other springs that are mentioned as 'gushing forth' (in the second two gardens). In verse [50] springs (in the first two gardens) promised to the believers have been described as flowing freely and ceaselessly تَجْرِيَانِ [tajriyān] while in verse [66] the springs (in the second two gardens) are described as 'gushing forth' نَضَّاخَتَيْنِ [naḍḍākhatān]. The quality of 'gushing forth' is the characteristic of all springs, but the quality of 'flowing' is an additional characteristic of specific springs. This is the concise description of all four springs that the inmates of Paradise will be given.

Related Considerations

In Verse 46, the phrase, وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ (for the one who is fearful of having to stand before his Lord...55:46) refers, according to most exegetes of the Qur'ān, to standing before Allah on the Day of Resurrection to give the account of one's deeds. The word 'fearful' signifies that he is mindful under all conditions, whether in public or in private, that one day he has to appear in the Court of Allah to give an account of his deeds. Evidently such a person will never go near the sinful acts.

Other exegetes, like Qurtubī and others, interpret this to mean : 'the

one who is fearful of the Station of His Lord'. That is, he is mindful of the High Station of Allah whereby He is watchful and keeps guard over his words and deeds, overt or covert. All his movements and activities are known to Him. This explanation is close to the previous explanation, in that Allah's keeping guard over him will keep him away from sins.

دَوَاتَا أَفْنَانٍ (both having lot of branches...55:48). This describes the first two Gardens. There will be plenty of trees abounding in branches and consequently their shade will be dense, and the fruits will be in abundance. The other two Gardens are described later. No such qualities are mentioned about them, which may imply their relative deficiency in this quality.

فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجَيْنِ (In both there are two kinds of every fruit...52). The phrase "of every fruit" denotes that the first two gardens will comprehend all kinds of fruit. As opposed to this, verse [68] simply states فَاكِهَةٍ *fākihah* [=fruits] about the second two gardens. The word زَوْجَيْنِ *zawjān* [two kinds] means every fruit will be of two types. This may be referring to one kind of dried fruits, and the other of fresh ones. It could also mean that one kind will be of normal taste, and the other of some extra ordinary flavor. [Maḏharī]

لَمْ يَطْمِثْهُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌ (...whom neither a man will have touched before them, nor a *Jinn*...55:56). The word طَمَثَ *ṭamth* has different meanings. 'Menstrual discharge' is termed as *ṭamth*, and the menstruating woman as طَامِثٌ '*ṭamith*'. It also means 'sexual intercourse with a virgin'. This second sense is meant here in this verse.

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ (Is there any reward for goodness other than goodness?...55:60). Having described the two Gardens for the intimate believers, it is declared as a principle that a good deed attracts a good reward. The righteous believers will be blessed, therefore, with good rewards.

مُدْهَامً (both dark green!...55:64). This is one word verse, and it means 'dark green with foliage'. The word is derived from *idhimām* signifying, for a meadow or garden, to become of dark green hue inclining to black by reason of abundance of moisture or irrigation. This description is not assigned to the first two Gardens. This does not necessarily imply that they do not have this quality. The former Gardens are described as دَوَاتَا

أَفْئَان 'having lot of branches'. This comprehends the quality of 'dark green' as well.

فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حِسَانٌ (In them there are women, good and gorgeous,...55:70) The word خَيْرَاتٌ *khairāt* (translated above as 'good') refers to 'the good character of those women'; and the word حِسَانٌ *ḥisān* (translated above as 'gorgeous') refers to 'women who have beautiful features'. These qualities too will be common with the maidens of both the Gardens, to which reference was made in the foregoing verses.

مُتَكَبِّرِينَ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خُضِرٍ وَعَبَقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ (...reclining on green cushions and marvelously beautiful mattresses....55:76) Qāmūs explains that the word رَفْرَفٍ *rafrāf* means 'silk fabric greenish in colour' which is used in making carpets, pillows, cushions and other items of decoration. It is mentioned in the Arabic lexicon *Ṣiḥāḥ* that they are embellished with arboreal and floral patterns, which, in Urdu, is called مُشَجَّرٌ *mushajjar*. The noun عَبَقَرِيٍّ *‘abqariyy* refers to 'every fine, beautiful fabric or material' and the adjective *ḥisān* [beautiful] qualifies it.

تَبَرَّكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ (Glorious is the name of your Lord, the Lord of Majesty, the Lord of Honor....55:78) Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān is replete with verses that call attention to Allah's blessings, boons and bounties, and His favors upon man. In conclusion, this verse has been appended as a synopsis: What can one say about the Pure Being? Even His Name is Glorious. All Divine boons and bounties subsist by virtue of His Name. Allah, the Pure and the Most High, knows best!

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Ar-Raḥmān
Ends here